

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 000024 TOSEC 250123

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CRISIS?

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM HARTMAN

1. CBS REPORTED TODAY THAT THE ITALIAN SOCIALISTS HAD DECIDED TO WITHDRAW THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE MORO GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, EMBASSY ROME TELLS US THAT DECISION HAS YET TO BE OFFICIALLY TAKEN.

2. PSI LEADER DE MARTINO IN A SIGNED EDITORIAL IN THE DECEMBER 31 EDITION OF THE PARTY DAILY AVANTI DOUBTED WHETHER IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DELAY A GOVERNMENT CRISIS UNTIL AFTER THE PSI AND DC PARTY CONGRESSES (FEBRUARY AND MARCH), AND SAID THAT THE SOCIALISTS WOULD PROBABLY WITHDRAW THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE MORO GOVERNMENT NEXT WEEK.

3. DE MARTINO'S COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE DC ARE TWO: DC'S CONTEMPT FOR PSI VIEWS, AND DC SOLICITATION OF COMMUNIST SUPPORT IN THE PARLIAMENT WHILE CONTINUING TO CONSIDER THE

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PCI AS PART OF THE OPPOSITION.

4. AS A WAY OUT, DE MARTINO REITERATES TWO PSI DESIRES:

A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DC AND THE PCI, E.G., A GREATER SHARE OF THE SPOILS, AND DC ACCEPTANCE OF PCI ASSOCIATION (IN AN UNSPECIFIED WAY) WITH THE MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT.

5. THE SOCIALIST DIRECTORATE MEETS JANUARY 7-8, AT WHICH TIME A DECISION WILL BE MADE AS TO SOCIALIST INTENTIONS. WITH DE MARTINO NOW HAVING GONE OVER TO THOSE FAVORING A GOVERNMENT CHANGE (CRISIS), ONE IS NOW HIGHLY LIKELY.

6. REASONS FOR A DECISION TO HAVE A CRISIS NOW REMAIN UNCLEAR. WE KNOW THAT MANCINI AND NENNI'S PEOPLE ON THE RIGHT HOPE A CRISIS WILL FORCE NEW ELECTIONS IN WHICH THE PSI WILL GAIN. WE ALSO KNOW THAT OTHERS THINK THIS IS A GOOD TIME FOR THE SOCIALISTS TO GET A BETTER DEAL IN A NEW GOVERNMENT. IN ANY CASE, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH INNER-PARTY PRESSURES FOR A HARD LINE VIS A VIS THE DC INCREASED TO A POINT THAT DE MARTINO HAD TO GET ON THE BAND WAGON.

7. IF A CRISIS OCCURS, IT WILL, BECAUSE OF THE THREAT OF NEW ELECTIONS, BE A VERY SERIOUS AFFAIR. AS A MATTER OF PRACTICAL ITALIAN POLITICS, AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE MORO GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE FOUND UNTIL AFTER THE PARTY CONGRESSES. THUS EITHER MORO WOULD STAY IN PLACE UNTIL AFTER THE DC MARCH 4-8 CONGRESS, OR A TEMPORARY ALL-DC CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WILL BE INSTALLED.

8. WITHOUT THE SOCIALISTS THERE IS NO VIABLE GOVERNMENT MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT. SINCE ALL MAJOR PARTIES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SOCIALISTS, BUT INCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS, WANT TO AVOID EARLY ELECTIONS, AND SINCE THE PSI EDITORIAL INDICATES SOCIALIST WILLINGNESS TO BE DISSUADED FROM THEIR PRESENT COURSE WITH A GREATER SHARE OF THE PATRONAGE, THE OUTCOME WILL DEPEND HEAVILY ON THE DC RESPONSE TO THE SOCIALIST CHALLENGE. MY GUESS IS THAT A DEAL WILL BE STRUCK THAT WILL SATISFY THE SOCIALISTS AND AVOID EARLY ELECTIONS.

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9. MEMO CLEARED BY EUR, HARTMAN AND S -COVEY ROBINSON

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IT
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